

Joy Harjo

A MINI-BIOGRAPHY

- Born: 1951 in Tulsa, Oklahoma
- Muskogee, Creek Indian
- Author, poet, musician, and screenwriter
- Plays tenor sax in her band Poetic Justice
- She was the US Poet Laureate from 2019-2022
- Died: Not yet



Joy Harjo--Life

- Books
 - *Secrets from the Center of the World*
 - *She Had Some Horses*
- Poems
 - "Equinox"
 - "Mourning Song"
- Albums
 - *Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century*
 - *Winding Through the Milky Way*

Joy Harjo—Selected Works

I don't know anything anymore
or if that cricket is still singing
in a country where crickets are banned.
I'm Indian in a strange pastiche of hurt and
rain
smells like curry and sweat
from a sunset rock and roll restaurant.
A familiar demon groaning with fear
has stalked me here, ruins poetry, then
his swollen pride commandeers.

Chorus:

So long, goodbye, oh fearful one.
My desires had turned into a small mountain.
Of dirty clothes, sax gig bag, guitar
books, shoes and grief
that I packed and carried
from one raw wound to another.
Beneath the moon rocking above Los Angeles
or outside the stomp dance fire of memory,
I told him, you can choose to hate me
for going too far, or for being a nothing
next to a pretty nothing like you.
I can't get betrayal out of my mind,
out of my heart
in this hotel room where I'm packing for home.
I've seen that same face whirring
in the blur of a glass of wine
after the crashed dance,

the goodbye song
in the last world of fire and trash.

Chorus:

The most dangerous demons spring from fire
and a broken heart, warning of bittersweet
aftershave
and the musk of a thousand angels.
And then I let that thought go running away
because I refuse to stay in bondage
to an enemy, who thinks he wants what I
have.
The last council of peace was disrupted by this
fearful beast,
as I fled from the house of my mother
through this severed country.
I turned my cheek as my head parted through
a curtain of truth
and erupted from the spirit world to this
gambling place—
And I send prayers skyward
on smoke.
Release this suffering.
Let the pretty beast and all the world know
peace.
I refuse to sum it up anymore; it's not
possible.
I give it up
to the battering of songs against the light,
to the singing of the earnest cricket
in the last world of fire and trash.

"The Last World of Fire and Trash" by Joy Harjo

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear;
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages
That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.

Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.

We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care
And kindness in all things.

Breathe in, knowing we are made of
All this, and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we
Were born, and die soon within a
True circle of motion,

Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.

We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.

“Eagle Poem” by Joy Harjo